

The Tree Commission Meeting for the City of New Castle took place on May 2, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.

Members Present:      John Lloyd, Chairperson  
                                 Chip Patterson  
                                 Nancy Coning  
                                 Erv Thatcher  
                                 Tom Truman  
                                 Susan Keyser\*

Members Absent:      Fran Peden  
                                 Toby Hagerott  
                                 Mark Miller

\*Arrived at 6:45 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lloyd at 5:40 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the March and April minutes.

#### Members' Reports

Mr. Thatcher – A crab apple tree at Third Street across from Tenth Street was removed after a recent storm. Along the park walkway a pear tree has rotten crotches. A tree at Third & Harmony Streets is damaging the curb and is now affecting the blacktop. He suggested looking at both trees. Someone has cut the top out of a tree in Bull Hill near the playground equipment. Ms. Keyser's position is to leave the tree. Repeated vandalism of other trees in the area has killed two (2) trees previously and this tree is a replacement tree. *(Discussion about who is responsible for the vandalism took place.)*

Mr. Patterson – He distributed a spreadsheet showing the history of Tree Commission expenses for the last three (3) years. This was done because this body has been talking to Ms. Cathie Thomas about getting funding from the City. No response has been received to date. There was not much tree planting done during the last two (2) years but there have been chemical treatments done in 2008 and 2009. He is concerned that the day-to-day complaints of trimming, etc. will not be addressed. *(Further discussion included the amount to request, what should be included on the spreadsheet [reserve funds for storms] and grants followed.)* Grant monies are either maintenance or planning grants and are typically spread around. They cannot be used on private property, only City lands. Our maintenance costs are consistently low because we are proactive and do a good job. The Tree Commission has operated with a \$20,000 budget for a number of years. Ms. Keyser suggested requesting \$5,000 for tree plantings and \$12,000-\$15,000 for tree maintenance. Elm treatments cost about \$3,500 and are performed every three (3) years. *(General discussion followed.)*

16-E-6<sup>th</sup> Street – Ms. Joan Simpson appeared. Mr. Lloyd said the stem of a maple tree at this location is in bad shape and there is a lot of dead wood in the tree. Its health doesn't look good. Determination needs to be made whether it is on a State right-of-way or City property. *(Discussion followed, including declaring it to be a hazardous tree.)* Mr. Lloyd would like to have the tree removed and Ms. Simpson would like to have another tree planted and was asked to let him know what type of tree she would like. He would like to pursue having Tree, Inc. look at the tree and provide a price for removal. *(Discussion about cherry trees in the area took place.)*

**A motion was made by Ms. Keyser to obtain a price for removal of the subject tree. Mr. Thatcher seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.**

If there is any planting done it will occur in the fall. Ms. Keyser suggested asking Ms. Simpson if she would like the tree planted in her yard.

Ms. Keyser – Nothing to report.

Mr. Truman – There is a house on Delaware Street (at Dalby Alley) with two (2) Zelkova trees in the front. The trees have been pruned and stubs (3"-4") have been left sticking out of the tree. The pruning was not performed by Tree, Inc.

Ms. Coning – Nothing to report.

#### Old Business

Mr. Thatcher provided an update on the City's dikes and sluice gates. All dikes will need to be changed and raised over the next 3-5 years and the trees removed. Tree removal should be done over the next year. Taking the trees and stumps out now will weaken the banks of the dikes so they will be cut off even to the ground at this time. *(Lengthy discussion took place.)*

#### Chairman's Report

308 Moores Lane – *(Photos provided.)* Mr. Lloyd sent a letter to the insurance company filing a claim. A tree incurred major root breakage from a traffic accident. He had Bob Rizzarda look at the tree and quote a cost of \$2,740 (includes value of tree, removal of damaged tree, replacement tree and readying the area for the replacement tree). A \$175 consulting fee was quoted.

21 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street – The homeowner contacted Mr. Lloyd for a follow up on what is being done about the sycamore trees and the sidewalk. Mr. Carlson has no other comments beyond the report he has provided (copy sent to homeowner). They are healthy trees and Mr. Lloyd doesn't like having to remove them. Mr. Truman stated the distance from the steps to one of the trees is very narrow and he doesn't see how a sidewalk could be put in that location. Ms. Keyser thinks the homeowner should follow the suggestions provided by Mr. Carlson before removing the trees. She is not in favor of removal of trees when a solution is suggested. Mr. Patterson noted the porch protrudes into the public right of way. Mr. Carlson's report suggested using brick to the porch. The area around the steps could be improved with brick and taking the brick to the porch itself making a more level sidewalk. The homeowner's original complaint dealt with her concern with liability for these trees. Mr. Patterson is in favor of doing something with brick and take it to the porch, per Mr. Carlson's suggestion. *(Discussion followed.)* Mr. Lloyd will inform the homeowner that this body has no additional suggestions to provide.

5<sup>th</sup> and Juniper – The homeowner would like to have a planting. There is a grass strip between the curb and sidewalk. Mr. Lloyd suggested that any planting be done in the front yard. *(Discussion.)*

32 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street – There is a small dogwood tree that has two (2) dead stems of three (3) stems. *(Photo shown.)* About 30% of the tree is still alive. The homeowner brought this matter to our attention. Mr. Patterson said it was Mr. Carlson's opinion that the tree be removed citing the location is not good.  
**A motion was made by Ms. Keyser and seconded by Mr. Thatcher to remove the tree at 32 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The motion was unanimously approved.**

26 The Strand – Mr. Lloyd asked members to confirm discussion at the April meeting concerning the position of the box. The group agreed it is fine.

100 Stuyvesant – (*Photo shown.*) Two (2) Bradford pear trees were cut. One of the trees is still healthy. Mr. Lloyd said there is no room between the curb and the sidewalk and one of his suggestions would be to remove the trees. The area of the trees is very narrow. The Tree Commission planted both trees. The homeowner would like to have both trees cut back/topped. Mr. Lloyd informed the Tree Commission does not top trees and he favors removal. Commissioners will look at the trees before rendering its decision. (*Discussion.*) Mr. Lloyd informed the homeowner it is illegal to trim the trees.

Mr. Lloyd contacted Tree, Inc. and has him working on scheduling the trees at the cemetery. The cost is \$2,400 for three (3) trees.

300 Brylgon – Mr. Lloyd received a call stating the trees are causing problems, i.e., limbs falling on a garage. He looked at the area and the trees are healthy and he sees no issues. He asked Commissioners to look at the trees before further discussion.

300 Harmony – There is a silver maple damaging the curb, sidewalk and starting to damage the street. It has been trimmed several times. (*Mr. Thatcher described the damage.*) Mr. Lloyd recommends the tree be left alone at this time. He would like to see if the City gives the Tree Commission extra money before taking action. It is not hazardous. It was last trimmed in Fall 2010 by Tree, Inc.

#### Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie

Debbie Turner  
Stenographer